

# Finalists: Candidates in town Thursday, Friday

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"My favorite part of being a superintendent is being able to get in and work with the community," Johnstone said. "They will find that I'm an approachable, visible leader who is focused on kids."

Johnstone is also a finalist for the Greater Albany Public School District and Monroe (Wash.) School District superintendent positions.

Jeff Leo has led the Knappa School District of Knappa in Northwest Oregon for the last four years. He also serves as the high school/middle school principal for the district, which has a student population of 500.

Leo, 42, said he likes the Dallas district's "student-centric" philosophy and also the family-oriented, close-knit feel of the community. He has three young children, ages 4, 5 and 7, and believes Dallas would be a great place to raise his family — and enroll his kids into school.

He said, if chosen for the job, he would bring experience as a superintendent and principal, would seek input from everyone, from staff and teachers to administrators and community members, before making major decisions.

## Meet the Finalists

**What:** Community meet-and-greet sessions with Dallas School District superintendent finalists.

**When:** Thursday and Friday from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

**Where:** Dallas High School library, 1250 SE Holman Ave.

**Who:** Thursday, Michelle Johnstone; Friday, Jeff Leo and Randy Refsland.

**For more information:** www.dallas.k12.or.us/



**Blanchard**

"Dallas is a great district already," Leo said. "I would want to find out what people think we need to do to continue to get better."

Randy Refsland has been the superintendent in Wisconsin's Clinton Community School District, serving 1,200 students, for five years.

Refsland, 55, said he is interested in becoming Dallas' next superintendent because he likes the support given to schools in Oregon. He said the environment for schools in Wisconsin "has made it tough for us to do our job." Refsland said he would like to spend the rest of his career in a place

that values schools and he believe Dallas fits that bill.

If offered the job, Refsland said he will bring the experience of having been a teacher for 18 years, a union president and school principal.

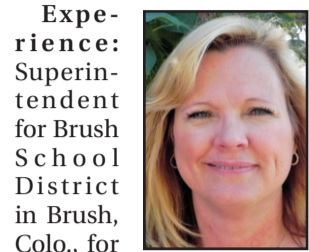
"I like to think I bring a broad perspective," Refsland said. "There's not just one way to do things. ... They (people in Dallas) should expect that I will be committed to improving our school district every day I'm there."

The three candidates will visit the district either Thursday or Friday for school and community tours, with the day concluding at a meet-and-greet starting at 5 p.m. both days, followed by second interviews with the board.

"The plan is to provide an opportunity for anyone to come in and talk to them," Blanchard said.

## DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT FINALISTS

**Michelle Johnstone**  
Age: 51



**Johnstone**

**Experience:** Superintendent for Brush School District in Brush, Colo., for four years. Elementary school principal in St. Vrain School District (25,000 students) in Longmont, Colo. (four years) and in the Greeley School District (18,000 students) in Greeley, Colo. (six years). Prior to becoming an administrator 14 years ago, Johnstone was an elementary school teacher.

**Education:** Doctorate in educational leadership and policy studies from the University of Northern Colorado; Master of Arts in linguistically diverse learners from University of Northern Colorado.

**Jeff Leo**  
Age: 42



**Leo**

**Experience:** Superintendent and high school and middle school principal for the Knappa School District in Northwest Oregon for four years. His prior experience also includes teaching math and serving as head girls basketball coach for Astoria High School in Astoria for four years. Before moving to Oregon, Leo taught math in Yuma, Ariz., for eight years.

**Education:** He has a master's degree in educational leadership from Northern Arizona University and a Bachelor of Science in secondary education from Western Montana College.

**Randy Refsland**  
Age: 55



**Refsland**

**Experience:** Superintendent of Clinton Community School District in Clinton, Wis., for five years. He took a one-year sabbatical to serve as the chief academic officer with the Ameson Education Foundation in Nanjing, China. Superintendent in the Waupun Area School District, Waupun, Wis., and a high school principal in Milton, Wis. and 18 years teaching experience in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

**Education:** He has a doctorate in educational leadership from Edgewood College and a Master of Science in secondary education from University of Wisconsin - Platteville.

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